

Contributions

WHY I AM A CHRISTIAN

A SYMPOSIUM

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It is difficult to analyze one's motives. They are more complex than any chemical combination. So many influences, past and present, near and remote, enter into our lives, that we cannot say that any one thing is sole cause for any action. Among the causes which have helped me to be a Christian the following I believe are chief:

1. By the grace of God I have been blessed with Christian ancestors. Amish, Dunkard and Methodist blood have been my good heritage. Father and great-grandfather were preachers. Thanks to their overcoming it is easier for me to overcome. Liquor and tobacco and worldly revellings have never been any temptation to me. Had heredity been the only factor perhaps I would not be a Christian but to it I certainly owe a heart ready for the good seed.

2. From childhood up I have been taught to be a Christian. I can distinctly remember sitting on mother's knee while yet clad in kilted skirts and learning of Jesus' love. I cannot remember the time when I had any other idea than that of being a Christian. I cannot point to the time when I was converted for I have always been converted and joined the church as soon as opportunity came. I would God that every young person could be equally blessed. I would not seem to do away with the necessity of conversion. It is a real experience. But it is better to learn to love and obey God from the very dawning of the consciousness of accountability than to grow in self-will and have the surrender to God's will come as a sudden experience later on.

3. I am now a Christian because as I have grown in wisdom and experience I have found my parent's teaching true. The Bible and the church have been strong helps to me in doing right. The world has other helps but nothing to equal these. I have found no reason to give them up. Some ideas of course have been changed but increasing reason and knowledge only enable me to get more good from the means of grace God has given.

Christ has been and is more and more my Savior. Touch with him inspires repentance for sin. The sweetness and purity of his life makes me ashamed of mine, and ever and again I seek a consciousness of his presence that I may be like him. I have never exhausted him. Other friends I have who have helped me but suddenly defects of character appear and I realize their limitations. Not so with Christ. When at the highest pinnacle of my attainment Jesus seems beyond me saying, "Follow me." I have found no fault in him. If God be better than Jesus I do not know how for Jesus'

life is the best I know. If the world can produce anything better than Christianity let it do so, but until it does I shall follow him who is my light and life. With him I am in my Father's house. In his kingdom all is love. I want to ever abide there.

C. F. YODER.

The Christian looks out on the world and wonders why *all* are not Christians. He realizes the blessings of that life hid with Christ in God and thinks that all should be enjoying the same blessings. It is reasonable to suppose and we know it to be a fact that there are men who wonder why we should choose to walk in the narrow path of Christianity.

The purpose of this paper is to give some of the reasons why I choose to follow Christ.

First of all, the blessings that Christians enjoy cannot be obtained, neither are they offered elsewhere. One of these blessings is freedom from guilt. The load of guilt for sins committed is the most grievous burden one can bear. This burden no man can remove from his own shoulders, but thru Christ we have complete deliverance. It is a most precious experience to look at all the sins of the past and to know that they are remembered against us no more, to know that in the day when we meet God, he will not hold us guilty of the sins that have been blotted out thru Christ.

But we have more than forgiveness. He not only pardons the past but he enables his followers to overcome sin. In His strength I can overcome temptation. This power can be received only by Christians. It is the power for which the great men of all ages have longed. All who would be perfect have found the "law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members," and some have found that Jesus Christ delivers from "the body of this death."

Another reason for being a Christian is the usefulness of the Christian life. Every truly great person is a person that is helpful to all with whom he comes in contact. No one can be so helpful as a conscientious Christian. To point a soul to Christ, to save a soul from destruction, to turn a hardened sinner from a life that is a disgrace, a shame, and even a menace to the community in which he lives, to turn such a one to Christ and lead him into a noble, useful, Christian life—this is true usefulness, and a privilege granted to Christians only.

Finally the Christian's life is the life that is truly happy. Freed from guilt, serving humanity, free in Christ he has peace with God, with his fellowmen and with himself. He has a conscience that gives him sweet rest at night, he has a hope that brightens the darkest circumstances, he has a mission that fills his life with service and joy, but most of all he has a Lord and Master who is infinite in power, in wisdom, and in love. One who has shown his love by dying for his

enemies to win them to righteousness. One who day by day grows nearer and dearer to his followers, who dwells within them and calls them his friends.

I am a Christian because Christ gives the most abundant life possible in time and in eternity, a life of infinite joy and perfection.

MARCUS A. WITTER.

To tell you, kind reader, why I am a Christian, but few words are needed. Man, created in God's own image, fallen by sin, can be uplifted again and saved only by being friend and follower of Jesus Christ who is God's manifestation of infinite love to a lost world. Weigh that thought carefully and ponder its wonderful meaning.

God is love. He wants us to become like him. He has given to us his only Son as an example and as a connecting link. Even as the vine is the only source thru which the vast resources of the earth may be carried to the branches, where they come forth the sweet, rich fruit, so thru Christ is the only way that our God given talents may be developed and increased and made to send forth blossoms of love and fruits of service.

The Christian's peace which is unknown to the world is in value more than rubies or diamonds. Man wants to be rich. The true Christian, tho he be lacking in material wealth, must be counted as among the infinitely rich. "In me," the Savior says, "ye shall have peace." By being like him, active, sinless, holy, and always fully trusting, we shall have perfect peace. Whoever knows the peace of God can give a clear and beautiful expression to a life of love. If thru your life the divine love flows, then all its tones are blended into one pure, sparkling stream of sweet peace. Peace, sweet peace, the gift of God's love!

Troubles and trials and temptations come, but they are easily overcome. They are only fleecy, floating clouds beneath a clear, blue sky. They help the Christian onward and upward, add beauty and lustre to the never-ending rainbow of life, and form a cornerstone we call stability of character.

Man loves to be crowned with victory, and to be conqueror in all things. Devotion and obedience to God, worship and praise of him, and fellowship with him is what victory thru love means. Those who live in fellowship with him, who are linked with him in their daily lives by a close and sweet communion, find their whole natures pervaded by a gentle, yet strong influence. Close friendship and fellowship with one whose aims are high, whose heart is pure, who is divine love itself, is priceless. Such contact with Christ will make us pure even as he is pure.

The more Christ-like we become the higher the life we live. The Christian is ever growing, ever climbing upward. O the joy of such a life! O the beauty of a growing Christian character! O the simple grandeur of becoming like God!

GEORGE C. CARPENTER.